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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/631,140	07/31/2003	Mark L. Enders	14192	2222

7590 08/02/2005

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EXAMINER

BROWN, DREW J

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3616

DATE MAILED: 08/02/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/631,140	Applicant(s) ENDERS ET AL.	
	Examiner Drew J. Brown	Art Unit 3616	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
 - If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
 - If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
 - Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-51 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-51 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☒ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 31 July 2003 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. ____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date <u>10/29/04 & 7/31/03</u> . | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: ____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Specification

1. The disclosure is objected to because of the following informalities: The last paragraph on page 17 has numerals that do not appear in the drawings.

Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

2. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States;

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

3. Claims 1, 10-16, 18, 27-33, 35, and 44-50 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Nelson et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,848,715 B2). Nelson et al. discloses an airbag for preventing the lower body portion of a vehicle occupant from being propelled during a collision, which comprises rigid sheet metal (column 5, lines 52-55) front 132 and back 130 panels. A decorative trim panel 134 is attached to the first of two sides of the front panel, and the second side of the front panel is attached to the back panel. An adapter unit 138 is in communication with the back panel and is securely attachable to a diffuser portion 247 of the inflator 136. The adapter unit, distinct from the back panel, comprises an impression 248 with a first end portion configured to receive the inflator. The first end portion has an orifice 250 where the diameter is larger than, but substantially equal to, the diameter of the inflator. There is a sealing wedge 252

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disposed between the inflator and the first end portion, and a fastener 254 is attached to the diffuser portion of the inflator, wherein the impression further comprises a second end portion configured to receive the fastener (column 6, lines 28-30).

The applied reference has a common assignee with the instant application. Based upon the earlier effective U.S. filing date of the reference, it constitutes prior art under 35 U.S.C. 102(e). This rejection under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) might be overcome either by a showing under 37 CFR 1.132 that any invention disclosed but not claimed in the reference was derived from the inventor of this application and is thus not the invention "by another," or by an appropriate showing under 37 CFR 1.131.

4. Claims 1-3, 8, 16, 18-20, 25, and 33 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Lebaudy et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,543,801 B2). Lebaudy et al. discloses an airbag for preventing the lower body portion of a vehicle occupant (column 3, lines 5-7) from being propelled during a collision, which comprises a front panel 21 and a back panel 10 that are formed of sheet metal (column 4, line 1). The adapter unit 2, an integral part of the back panel, comprises an impression with a first end portion configured to receive the inflator 3. The adapter unit also comprises an orifice 9 formed in the back panel. The examiner considered the term "integral" to be defined to embrace constructions united by such means as fastening and welding (In re Hotte (CCPA) 177 USPQ 326).

5. Claims 1, 10, 18, 27, 35, and 44 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Schneider (U.S. Pat. No. 5,630,621). Schneider discloses an airbag for preventing the lower body portion of a vehicle occupant from being propelled during a collision, which comprises rigid front 40 and back 14 panels. A decorative trim panel 134 is attached to the first of two

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sides of the front panel (column 2, lines 35-38), and the second side of the front panel is attached to the back panel. An adapter unit 20 is in communication with the back panel and is securely attachable to a diffuser portion of the inflator 10. The adapter unit is also distinct from the back panel.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

6. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

7. Claims 35-37, 42, and 50 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lebaudy et al. in view of Schneider. Lebaudy et al. discloses an airbag for preventing the lower body portion of a vehicle occupant from being propelled during a collision, which comprises a front panel 21 and a back panel 10 that are formed of sheet metal (column 4, line 1). The adapter unit 2, an integral part of the back panel, comprises an impression with a first end portion configured to receive the inflator 3. The adapter unit also comprises an orifice 9 formed in the back panel. Lebaudy et al., however, does not disclose that a decorative trim panel is attached to the first of two sides of the front panel, and the second side of the front panel is attached to the back panel. Schneider et al. does disclose the decorative trim panel (column 2, lines 35-38). Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify Lebaudy et al. to attach a decorative trim panel to the front panel as taught by Schneider et al. so the outer surface of the airbag would match the interior of the vehicle.

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8. Claims 2-5, 7, 8, 17, 19-22, 24, 25, 34, 36-39, 41, 42, and 51 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nelson et al. in view of Schwark et al. Nelson et al. discloses the claimed airbag as discussed above but does not comprise an adapter unit that is integral with the back panel. Nelson et al. also does not disclose that the front and back panels can be made of a plastic material. Schwark et al. does disclose an adapter unit 80 that is integral with the back panel and that the front panel 120 can be formed of a plastic material (column 4, lines 40-42). Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to integrate the adapter with the back panel as taught by Schwark et al. in order to lower the cost of production since separate components would not be needed. It would be obvious to use a plastic material for the panels in order to alter the physical properties and appearance of the airbag, and it would also have been obvious to make the back panel 60 out of plastic in order to stay consistent with the front panel.

The adapter unit also comprises an impression with a first end portion configured to receive the inflator 18. The first end portion has an orifice 86 where the diameter is larger than the diameter of the inflator. There is a sealing wedge disposed between the fill valve 114 of the inflator and the first end portion (column 4, lines 30-33), and a fastener 112 is attached to the diffuser portion of the inflator, wherein the impression further comprises a second end portion configured to receive the fastener.

9. Claims 4, 5, 7, 17, 21, 22, 24, and 34 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lebaudy et al. in view of Schwark et al. Lebaudy et al. discloses the claimed airbag as discussed above but does not disclose that the first end portion has an orifice where the diameter is larger than the diameter of the inflator. Lebaudy et al. also does not disclose that

there is a sealing wedge between the inflator and the first end portion and that both the front and back panels can be made of a plastic material. Finally, Lebaudy et al. does not disclose that a fastener is attached to the diffuser portion of the inflator, and wherein the impression further comprises a second end portion configured to receive the fastener. However, Schwark et al. does disclose that the first end portion has an orifice 86 where the diameter is larger than the diameter of the inflator. There is a sealing wedge disposed between the fill valve 114 of the inflator and the first end portion (column 4, lines 30-33), and the front panel 120 is a plastic material. Also, a fastener 112 is attached to the diffuser portion of the inflator, wherein the impression further comprises a second end portion configured to receive the fastener. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have the diameter of the orifice be larger than that of the inflator so the inflator can fit inside of the orifice. It is obvious to have a sealing wedge so the gas cannot escape when passing between the inflator and the first end portion. Since the front panel is made of a plastic material, it would have been obvious to form the back panel 60 of plastic in order to stay consistent with the front panel. Also, it would have been obvious to have a fastener attached to the diffuser and a second end portion to receive the fastener so the diffuser could be secured during inflation.

10. Claims 38, 39, 41, and 51 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lebaudy et al. in view of Schneider and Schwark et al. Lebaudy et al., as modified by Schneider, discloses the claimed airbag as discussed above but does not disclose that the first end portion has an orifice where the diameter is larger than the diameter of the inflator. Lebaudy et al. also does not disclose that there is a sealing wedge between the inflator and the first end portion and that both the front and back panels can be made of a plastic material. Finally,

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Lebaudy et al. does not disclose that a fastener is attached to the diffuser portion of the inflator, and wherein the impression further comprises a second end portion configured to receive the fastener. However, Schwark et al. does disclose that the first end portion has an orifice 86 where the diameter is larger than the diameter of the inflator. There is a sealing wedge disposed between the fill valve 114 of the inflator and the first end portion (column 4, lines 30-33), and the front panel 120 is a plastic material. Also, a fastener 112 is attached to the diffuser portion of the inflator, wherein the impression further comprises a second end portion configured to receive the fastener. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have the diameter of the orifice be larger than that of the inflator so the inflator can fit inside of the orifice. It is obvious to have a sealing wedge so the gas cannot escape when passing between the inflator and the first end portion. Since the front panel is made of a plastic material, it would have been obvious to form the back panel 60 of plastic in order to stay consistent with the front panel. Also, it would have been obvious to have a fastener attached to the diffuser and a second end portion to receive the fastener so the diffuser could be secured during inflation.

11. Claims 2-5, 7, 8, 17, 19-22, 24, 25, 34, 36-39, 41, 42, and 51 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Schneider in view of Schwark et al. Schneider discloses the claimed airbag as discussed above but does not comprise an adapter unit that is integral with the back panel, or that there is an impression configured with a first end portion to receive the inflator in the back panel of the adapter unit. Schneider also does not disclose that the first end portion has an orifice with a diameter larger to that of the inflator, or that there is a sealing wedge between the inflator and the first end portion. Schneider does not disclose that a fastener is

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attached to the diffuser portion of the inflator, and wherein the impression further comprises a second end portion configured to receive the fastener. Furthermore, Schneider does not disclose that the adapter unit comprises an orifice formed in the back panel and that the front and back panels can be made of a plastic material. However, Schwark et al. does disclose that the adapter unit is integral with the back panel, and that there is an impression formed in the back panel of the adapter to receive the inflator. The first end portion has an orifice 86 where the diameter is larger than the diameter of the inflator. There is a sealing wedge disposed between the fill valve 114 of the inflator and the first end portion (column 4, lines 30-33), the adapter unit comprises and orifice 86 formed in the back panel, and the front panel 120 is a plastic material. Also, a fastener 112 is attached to the diffuser portion of the inflator, wherein the impression further comprises a second end portion configured to receive the fastener. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to integrate the adapter with the back panel as taught by Schwark et al. in order to lower the cost of production since separate components would not be needed. It would have been obvious to have an impression formed in the back panel with a first end portion to receive the inflator so that the adapter could offer protection of the inflator at all times. It would have been obvious to have the diameter of the orifice be larger than that of the inflator so the inflator can fit inside of the orifice. Furthermore, it is obvious to have an orifice in the back panel so the inflator could be attached to the back panel, and it is obvious to have a sealing wedge so the gas cannot escape when passing between the inflator and the first end portion. Since the front panel is made of a plastic material, it would have been obvious to form the back panel 60 of plastic in order to stay consistent with the front panel. Also, it would have been obvious to have a fastener attached to

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the diffuser and a second end portion to receive the fastener so the diffuser could be secured during inflation.

12. Claims 10-15 and 27-32 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lebaudy et al. in view of Nelson et al. Lebaudy et al. discloses the claimed airbag as discussed above but does not disclose that the adapter unit is distinct from the back panel. Nelson et al., however, does disclose that the adapter unit is distinct from the back panel. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have the adapter unit be distinct from the back panel so the adapter unit could be replaced with an improved unit or exchanged with a new one if damaged.

The adapter unit also comprises an impression 248 with a first end portion configured to receive the inflator. The first end portion has an orifice 250 where the diameter is larger than, but substantially equal to, the diameter of the inflator. There is a sealing wedge 252 disposed between the inflator and the first end portion, and a fastener 254 is attached to the diffuser portion of the inflator, wherein the impression further comprises a second end portion configured to receive the fastener (column 6, lines 28-30).

13. Claims 44-49 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lebaudy et al. in view of Schneider and Nelson et al. Lebaudy et al., as modified by Schneider, discloses the claimed airbag as discussed above but does not disclose that the adapter unit is distinct from the back panel. Nelson et al., however, does disclose that the adapter unit is distinct from the back panel. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have the adapter unit be distinct from the back panel so the adapter unit could be replaced with an improved unit or exchanged with a new one if damaged.

The adapter unit also comprises an impression 248 with a first end portion configured to receive the inflator. The first end portion has an orifice 250 where the diameter is larger than, but substantially equal to, the diameter of the inflator. There is a sealing wedge 252 disposed between the inflator and the first end portion, and a fastener 254 is attached to the diffuser portion of the inflator, wherein the impression further comprises a second end portion configured to receive the fastener (column 6, lines 28-30).

14. Claims 6 and 23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lebaudy et al. in view of Edwards, II et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,749,219 B2). Lebaudy et al. discloses the claimed airbag as discussed above but does not disclose that the first end portion comprises an orifice having a first diameter that is smaller than or equal to the diameter of the inflator, wherein the adapter unit is securely attached to the diffuser portion of the inflator through a press fit. Edwards, II et al. does disclose that the first end portion has a smaller diameter and that the adapter unit is attached securely to it through a press fit (column 1, line 60-62). Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the invention of Lebaudy et al. to utilize a snap fit as taught by Edwards, II et al. in order to eliminate the need for other fasteners and also to increase the strength of the attachment by having two walls overlap.

15. Claim 40 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lebaudy et al. in view of Schneider and Edwards, II et al. Lebaudy et al., as modified by Schneider, discloses the claimed airbag as discussed above but does not disclose that the first end portion comprises an orifice having a first diameter that is smaller than or equal to the diameter of the inflator, wherein the adapter unit is securely attached to the diffuser portion of the inflator through a press fit.

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Edwards, II et al. does disclose that the first end portion has a smaller diameter and that the adapter unit is attached securely to it through a press fit (column 1, line 60-62). Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to further modify the invention of Lebaudy et al. to utilize a snap fit as taught by Edwards, II et al. in order to eliminate the need for other fasteners and also to increase the strength of the attachment by having two walls overlap.

16. Claims 6, 23, and 40 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nelson et al. in view of Schwark et al. and Edwards, II et al. Nelson et al., as modified by Schwark et al., discloses the claimed airbag as discussed above but does not disclose that the first end portion comprises an orifice having a first diameter that is smaller than or equal to the diameter of the inflator, wherein the adapter unit is securely attached to the diffuser portion of the inflator through a press fit. Edwards, II et al. does disclose that the first end portion has a smaller diameter and that the adapter unit is attached securely to it through a press fit (column 1, line 60-62). Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to further modify the invention of Nelson et al. to utilize a snap fit as taught by Edwards, II et al. in order to eliminate the need for other fasteners and also to increase the strength of the attachment by having two walls overlap.

17. Claims 6, 23, and 40 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Schneider in view of Schwark et al. and Edwards, II et al. Schneider, as modified by Schwark et al., discloses the claimed airbag as discussed above but does not disclose that the first end portion comprises an orifice having a first diameter that is smaller than or equal to the diameter of the inflator, wherein the adapter unit is securely attached to the diffuser portion of the inflator

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through a press fit. Edwards, II et al. does disclose that the first end portion has a smaller diameter and that the adapter unit is attached securely to it through a press fit (column 1, line 60-62). Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to further modify the invention of Schneider to utilize a snap fit as taught by Edwards, II et al. in order to eliminate the need for other fasteners and also to increase the strength of the attachment by having two walls overlap.

18. Claims 9 and 26 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lebaudy et al. in view of Ozaki et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,676,147 B2). Lebaudy et al. discloses the claimed airbag as discussed above but does not disclose that the back panel further comprises a lip portion encompassing the orifice, which is configured to prevent the diffuser portion of the inflator from becoming separated from the adapter unit during discharge of the inflator. Ozaki et al. does disclose the lip portion 64 encompassing the orifice and configured to secure the diffuser portion of the inflator during discharge. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify Lebaudy et al. use a lip as taught by Ozaki et al. so that a separate component would not be needed to restrain the inflator during discharge; instead, the lip can be an integral part of the adapter.

19. Claim 43 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lebaudy et al. in view of Schneider and Ozaki et al. Lebaudy et al., as modified by Schneider, discloses the claimed airbag as discussed above but does not disclose that the back panel further comprises a lip portion encompassing the orifice, which is configured to prevent the diffuser portion of the inflator from becoming separated from the adapter unit during discharge of the inflator. Ozaki et al. does disclose the lip portion 64 encompassing the orifice and configured to secure the diffuser

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portion of the inflator during discharge. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to further modify Lebaudy et al. use a lip as taught by Ozaki et al. so that a separate component would not be needed to restrain the inflator during discharge; instead, the lip can be an integral part of the adapter.

20. Claims 9, 26, and 43 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nelson et al. in view of Schwark et al. and Ozaki et al. Nelson et al., as modified by Schwark et al., discloses the claimed airbag as discussed above but does not disclose that the back panel further comprises a lip portion encompassing the orifice, which is configured to prevent the diffuser portion of the inflator from becoming separated from the adapter unit during discharge of the inflator. Ozaki et al. does disclose the lip portion 64 encompassing the orifice and configured to secure the diffuser portion of the inflator during discharge. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to further modify Nelson as taught by Ozaki et al. to use a lip so that a separate component would not be needed to restrain the inflator during discharge; instead, the lip can be an integral part of the adapter.

21. Claims 9, 26, and 43 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Schneider in view of Schwark et al. and Ozaki et al. Schneider, as modified by Schwark et al., discloses the claimed airbag as discussed above but does not disclose that the back panel further comprises a lip portion encompassing the orifice, which is configured to prevent the diffuser portion of the inflator from becoming separated from the adapter unit during discharge of the inflator. Ozaki et al. does disclose the lip portion 64 encompassing the orifice and configured to secure the diffuser portion of the inflator during discharge. Therefore, it would have been

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obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to further modify Schneider as taught by Ozaki et al. to use a lip so that a separate component would not be needed to restrain the inflator during discharge; instead, the lip can be an integral part of the adapter.

22. Claims 11-16, 28-33, and 45-50 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Schneider in view of Nelson et al. Schneider discloses the claimed airbag as discussed above, but does not disclose that there is an impression configured with a first end portion to receive the inflator in the back panel of the adapter unit. Schneider also does not disclose that the first end portion has an orifice with a diameter larger to that of the inflator, or that there is a sealing wedge between the inflator and the first end portion. Schneider does not disclose that a fastener is attached to the diffuser portion of the inflator, and wherein the impression further comprises a second end portion configured to receive the fastener. Finally, Schneider does not disclose that a fastener is attached to the diffuser portion of the inflator, wherein the impression further comprises a second end portion configured to receive the fastener. However, Nelson et al. discloses an adapter unit that comprises an impression 248 with a first end portion configured to receive the inflator. The first end portion has an orifice 250 where the diameter is larger than, but substantially equal to, the diameter of the inflator. There is a sealing wedge 252 disposed between the inflator and the first end portion, and a fastener 254 is attached to the diffuser portion of the inflator, wherein the impression further comprises a second end portion configured to receive the fastener (column 6, lines 28-30). Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have an impression formed in the back panel with a first end portion to receive the inflator so that the

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adapter could offer protection of the inflator at all times. It would have been obvious to have the diameter of the orifice be larger than that of the inflator or substantially equal so the inflator can fit inside of the orifice without wasting space. Furthermore, it is obvious to have a sealing wedge so the gas cannot escape when passing between the inflator and the first end portion. Also, it would have been obvious to have a fastener attached to the diffuser and a second end portion to receive the fastener so the diffuser could be secured during inflation.

Conclusion

The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Hirano et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,382,664 B1) discloses a passenger seat airbag comprising an inflator disclosed in an adapter unit.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Drew J. Brown whose telephone number is 571-272-1362. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Thursday from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m..


If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Paul N. Dickson can be reached on 571-272-6669. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

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Drew J Brown
Examiner
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DJB

 7/25/05
PAUL N. DICKSON
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 1600